

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
AUTUMN QUARTER
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CLARK KELLOGG

Thank you very much, President Kirwan. Good morning and congratulation to the graduates.

It is indeed a privilege and pleasure for me to have the chance to be here. I would like to just echo a couple remarks which President Kirwan made. One is that he is truly, as a matter of fact that is an understatement, he is more than a passing basketball fan. You could put his picture next to the word fanatic for basketball and it would be very appropriate.

I also want to bring your attention to the fact that I talked to President Kirwan about giving me a short, simple and plain introduction. And I told him that I was going to have you evaluate him on his coachability. He is clearly someone that loves athletics and education but in the area of coachability he made have fallen just a bit short this morning.

You know, it's amazing, as I think about graduation. It's a day of rejoicing and celebration not only for you, the graduate, but for your family, your spouses and your friends and for your other supporters. And it truly should be a day for joyous celebration and rejoicing. You've accomplished a tremendous goal and this is probably a high-water mark in your life -- hopefully one of many high-water marks.

It's ironic to me that just two years ago I sat where you sit now, ready to receive my bachelors degree in marketing after taking the long, circuitous route to a degree when I postponed that by going to the NBA back in 1982. As I think back to that day, a lot of emotions overwhelm me, thanksgiving, gratitude, excitement, joy. And because it's been only two years, when President Kirwan called me a couple of months ago and asked me to speak at commencement, I don't think I repoded with an infirmative right away because I was in shock. I mean two years ago, almost to this day, I graduated, and then President Kirwan is calling me this fall to speak at the commencement.

And it overwhelmed me a bit to the quite honest. I wondered if I would even be ready to meet that kind of challenge. And as the days continued to move by and get closer to this day, my anxiety grew. And grew. And I was threatened to be completely overwhelmed by the magnitude of this thing. When I told my family and friends I had been asked to this and I had agreed to do it, they even heightened my anxiety because they got so pumped up about it. Because it was such a big deal. And as I thought about it, it is a tremendous privilege and great, great special honor. But as I thought about that, the butterflies started coming a lot more and a lot heavier. And when that happens in my life I go to two sources. I can seek and find solace for my spirit from two sources --the word of God, the Bible, and my wife, Rosie, of 15 years.

So as I looked at the world of God there were two passages that came to mind as I contemplated being the commencement speaker. One deals with the issue of giving and was written by Paul. And it talks about the idea--actually, I'll quote the scripture. It says basically this, when the willingness is there whatever gift you have is acceptable based on what you have, not what you don't have.

And as I thought about commencement speakers from the perspective that I give commencement speakers, it was typically someone that had been unbelievably accomplished in education or business or the arts or government. It was somebody that probably was a little more seasoned in the issues and challenges of life than me. It typically would, quite frankly., be somebody a little older than me. I know at 37 I may seem ancient to some of the graduates here but by and large I don't like to look at myself that way. But as I thought about that and thought about why I didn't qualify, if President Kirwan and other folks at the University thought enough of me to share of my experience, then, clearly, there was something that maybe I have to offer. And it didn't have to do with what stature I didn't have but what by the grace of God I had achieved and been through in my life.

Another passage that came to mind was written by Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes. "The race doesn't always go to the swift or the battle always to the strong. Nor does food come to the

wise, or weath to the brilliant or favor to the learned, but time and chance happen to us all." And as much as we like to explain every single situation that transpires in our lives, as much as we like to have a handle, a difinitive handle, on everything we encounter, guess what, sometimes there is no real clear cut answer. I mean I think the NBA lockout is a case in point for those who follow NBA basketball. It's hard to figure out why there's no agreement. Well in this case I think time and chance happened to me for this special privilege and opportunity. And I'm extremely thankful to have a chance to be here.

The other element I mentioned in terms of seeking solace for my spirit whenever I am troubled is obviously my wife. When she sensed my anxiety about speaking she said, "Clark, you need to think of it from this perspective, One, you and I have been together for over 19 years. We have been married for over 15. In all that time you have been a good friend, a good father for our three children, a good husband -- I was hoping she would use the words excellent -- but she chose the word good for some reason. But she said good in those area. And that is to be highly commended. "You've always been ble to take care of all of our needs, You've met even most of our wants." My grandfather told me a long time ago when you get married you take care of your wifes needs and some of her wants. Well, I've been able to take care of not only her needs but more than some of her wants. And I think God for that.

And she said, "In doing that your've also had a chance to be generous to others. Well, those things are highly commendable and I think they qualify you to be asked to be the commencement speaker." But she said, "the most remarkable thing that I think may set you apart, may differentiate you a little bit, is that you've been able to do all of that legally and ethically without the benefit of of ever having had a real job." She said, "Boy you haven't worked a day in your life." And you know, I haven't, I haven't. Because I went from student athlete to NBA player. I went from NBA player to TV commentator. And I can't have more fun in my work than I have had. And it truly a blessing to have work that you enjoy, you don't even consider being work.

I've only got a few more minutes and I just want to bring things to a close. But I want to talk about the life cycle that the

graduates are in right now. It varies. This is a diverse group. And I also want to compliment you on your creativity. There are some wonderful looking hats out there. And it's nice to see that kind of creativity. But everybody is in a different stage in their life cycle. Those behind me, those here in the arena, those that are graduates. You could be single and job hunting. You could be contemplating marriage and job hunting. You could be newly married and job hunting. You could be old fogey married and job hunting, possibly. You could be already on the career path of your choice. You could be enhancing your career path right now. You could be in some other state of adjustment or transition.

But I think one of the challenges that I know I face and I think that we all face is somehow trying to balance what we do with who and what we are and who and what we are becoming.

And that's kinda the direction I would like to go in my remaining time. Achievement and status, is very much highly valued and highly esteemed in our culture and in a lot cases highly compensated. We can debate pros and cons of that all day. That is a discussion for another time. But I think there is great danger in allowing whatever we do to define who we are. I realize that is a thin line. But I read a book called "Grace Works" by Dudley Hall a few years ago. And he put it this way: "Our lives are most full and satisfying when being defines doing." Not the other way around. Our nature, our inherent nature defines character. We are created uniquely and wonderfully made. We have different gifts and abilities and talents. And we're most fulfilled when we operate in agreement with our nature in regards to the things we do..

And I just want to point out an illustration to maybe drive that home a little bit. Back in 1984 my wife and I got a dog, a German shepard. He lived for twelve years and we finally have to put him to sleep in 1996. We waited about a year before we got another pet and my daughter decided she wanted a hamster. Well, we got a little hamster in April; of 1998. So we've had it a little over a half a year. And I love the little hamster. Her name is Amy and I'll sit there some nights just watching her, crawling around in her cage, going through her tubes, chewing on her water bottle. And as I watch her I think "Boy, I wish she

could be like Cruiser, our dog." I wish I could pull her out of this cage, let her run around. And I wish I could teach her how to come when I call her and how to lay down next to me, how to bark on command. And I sit there and think, "Boy, it would be great if I could do that." But you know what, Amy's nature is that of a little rat. So no matter how much I would like to make her bark and lie down next to me and come on command, even if I could do that, at some point her nature is going to dictate her behavior. I can't have her running around the house. For one, she's nocturnal. She's not like a dog who sleeps when the people of the house sleep. Amy sleeps when we're awake. Then when we go to bed she's up. Going through her cage, making all kind of noise. The point I am making is that even if I could do that and tried to do that she wouldn't be happy because she's a rat. Renamed a hamster. And the point is that when we operate in who we are created to be and what we are created to be we will have fulfillment. We will have satisfaction. A successful living doesn't necessarily define a successful life.

As I think about the nature of who we are, God gives us the ability to reason, to think, to express love and so forth, in addition to gifts and abilities that are different for all of us. But the core of who we have to deal with values. So often times we can spend hours developing a career plan, a business plan, and not given any plan to developing that inner man or woman. Because it takes time and energy. And you have to ask yourself some hard questions.

But I just want to list some values briefly for consideration. I read a book called "What Makes the Great, Great" by Dennis Kimbro and he lists a study of the most commonly held values in our society. Achievement, appearance, compassion, courage, creativity, which is on great display here, faith, health, honesty, justice, knowledge, loyalty, morality, pleasure, power, recognition, relationships, responsibility, self-discipline, wealth, wisdom and work. I'm good at making lists. The difficult part when you talk about values and what you're going to anchor your life on, is that not only do you need a list but you have to internalize and prioritize those values. And that's the challenge that I want to lay before all of us. To think about not only what we're going to do but who and what are we going to be in terms of personal growth and personal development and impacting others for good.

I close with this as a former athlete at every level, high school, college and pro, and even now as a commentator. I understand how deeply imbedded the performance and doing mentality is. We all in some form or fashion are judged by performance. And that won't change. That's reality. And it probably won't change any time soon.

But as you strive to do well, certainly give at least as much attention, if not more, to being well. A life anchored in enduring values certainly will outshine any temporal performance.